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Notes on Some Difficult Passages in the Old Testament.

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THE paper which I have the honor to present to you scarcely deserves that name. It is little more than scraps from my note-books patched together; the passages which I have chosen for annotation being in general those in which I think the difficulties are to be solved by emendation of the Masoretic text. It possesses cohesion and consequence only indirectly, as it may serve to illustrate some principles of text criticism.

Ezekiel i. 1-3. These verses contain two separate headings with two distinct systems of dating. The first of these headings, contained in vs. 1, makes use of an era otherwise unknown, which commenced about 623 B.C. The second heading, vs. 2, dates from the era of the deportation of Jehoiachin. But not only is the second verse a duplicate of the first, repeating the date according to another era; the first part of the third verse repeats the statement of the first verse as to the place of the prophecy, at the same time giving the prophet's name, and substituting the third person for the first person used in the first verse. Both the Hebrew text and the versions agree in giving this double heading. Translated as they stand the verses read: "And it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth, on the fifth of the month, and I in the midst of the captivity by the river of Kebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2. In the fifth of the month; *i.e.* the fifth year of the captivity of king Joiachin. 3. Surely came to pass the word of Yahweh unto Ezekiel son of Buzi, the priest, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river of Kebar. And the hand of Yahweh was upon him there."

Ewald says concerning vs. 3, "Moreover, nowhere else in the whole book is the prophet spoken of in the third person, nor, excepting xxiv. 24, his name mentioned." He supposes vs. 2 and 3^a to be a gloss added by the prophet on his last revision of the book,

both for the purpose of giving a date from a Hebrew event, and also as a convenient method of weaving in his name. Smend rejects the idea of a gloss or interpolation, much as the form of the verses points to it, because the Jewish era of Jehoiachin's deportation is used in thirteen other places in Ezekiel. His argument is somewhat inconsequential. Cornill, contrary to all critical rules, regards the first verse, dating from an unknown era, as the gloss, and vs. 2 as the original dating. Verse 3 he emends, because it presents a grammatical difficulty, and retains.

The treatment which these verses have received has occasioned me some surprise, for the explanation of the difficulties has seemed to lie quite on the surface. The date is given in the first verse in these words: **בשלישים שנה ברביעי בחמשה לחדש**, "In the thirtieth year, in the fourth, on the fifth of the month." The second verse takes the last two words and comments on them thus: **בחמשה לחדש**, "on the fifth of the month"; **היא השנה החמישית לגלות**, "i.e. the fifth year of the captivity of king Joiachin." The era used in the first verse was probably Babylonian, perhaps the era of the independence of Babylon. To use a non-Jewish era was not in accordance with Jewish usage. This peculiarity, therefore, led some one to write on his margin, or between the lines, the date according to the Jewish era used elsewhere in Ezekiel, which, for the same reason, in time crept into the text. This gloss was probably of early origin, before the Babylonian era came to be forgotten; although it is possible that "the fifth year," **החמישית**, of the gloss, was suggested by "on the fifth," **בחמשה**, of the original text. The form of this annotation is familiar in the *midrashim*, and in Jewish commentaries of all dates. The words to be annotated are copied, and the comment or explanation attached to them by means of the pronoun **היא**, "i.e." Thus: "On the fifth of the month; i.e. the fifth year of the captivity of king Joiachin."

Ezekiel i. 13. Another example of the same method of glossation is to be found in the thirteenth verse. The Masoretic text reads: **ורמות החיות מראיהם פנה לייאש בערות כמראה הלפרים**; **היא מתהלכת בין החיות ונה לאש ומנהאש יוצא פרק**, which it is practically impossible to construe. I presume all will agree that the article in **הלפרים** is a scribal error, a repetition of the last letter of the preceding **מראה**. But what are we to do with the pronoun **היא**? The only word to which it could refer grammatically is **רמות**, but to use it as the pronoun for that word makes nonsense. More-

over, as we shall see, **דמוֹת** is itself an error for **בינוֹת**. The LXX drop **דִּיָּא** altogether, and point the next word as plural, **מִתְהַלְכֵת**. Cornill follows this reading, which has the advantage over the Masoretic text of almost making sense. At least **מִתְהַלְכֵת** = *συστηρε-φομένων* makes a tenable grammatical construction, even if it does not afford an altogether satisfactory sense. But this does not account for the presence of **דִּיָּא** in the Masoretic text, which word does not seem to bear a sufficient resemblance to what precedes or what follows to allow it to be explained as a mere careless repetition of letters by some scribe. But if the LXX had found such an impossible word, then it would have been natural for them to drop it and point the next word in the plural in order to establish some sort of grammatical construction in the sentence. I believe that it was in the text which the LXX had before them, and that it and the three succeeding words are an old gloss, explanatory of the word **לִפְדִּים**; "torches, *i.e.* going to and fro among the creatures." As Hitzig points out, we must change **דמוֹת** to **בינוֹת** and drop the suffix from **מראהֵם**. Making these changes, the verse should be translated: "And between the creatures an appearance like burning coals of fire, like torches, and the fire shone, and from the fire proceeded lightning," **ובינות החיות מראה כנחלי אש בערות כמראה לפדים**, "וַנֵּה לֹאשׁ וּמִן הָאֵשׁ יוצא בֶרֶק **היא מתהלכת** בין החיות". An explanatory and appropriate annotation was made by some one to explain how this fire was like torches, "*i.e.* it went to and fro among the creatures,"

Ezekiel i. 3. But to turn back once more to the heading of this chapter; the first two words of vs. 3 **הָיָה הָיָה** are unusual, and have occasioned much comment. Moreover, what follows them is a repetition with additions of the fact stated in the first verse, that the visions occurred **עַל נהר כּבֶּר**. Cornill gets rid of the structural difficulty in the words **הָיָה הָיָה** by omitting **הָיָה**, and avoids the meaningless repetition by dropping the first verse, as already mentioned. Now it seems to me clear that vs. 3^a is a gloss on the word **יִדְּיָה** of vs. 1. After a fashion common enough in later use, the glossator, in order to show the word referred to, wrote on one of his margins, referring to vs. 1, the root letters of the word **יִדְּיָה**, viz. **היה**, and then a gloss on the verse at large, or rather on the first half of it, thus: "And was in the thirtieth year, in the fourth, on the fifth of the month, in the midst of the captivity on the river Kebar." "*Was* : — was the word of Yahweh unto Ezekiel son of Buzi, the priest, in

the land of the Chaldeans, on the river Kebar." This gloss, which was originally written on the margin or at the foot of the page, became ultimately incorporated in the text, and the stem letters **לך**, intended to give the necessary reference to the passage glossed, were pointed as an infinitive absolute, giving a sense unsuited to the passage, as Cornill has justly observed (*cf.* 1 Kings xiii. 32). This gloss, like vs. 2, since it appears in the LXX, was evidently early. It was inserted in Palestine after the captivity, and presumably after the time of Ezra, as is shown by the geographical notice that the river Kebar was in the land of the Chaldeans, a statement not likely to have been made by one writing in the land of the Chaldees.

Omitting vs. 2 and 3^a, it will be found that vs. 1 and 3^b unite to make a consistent, intelligible, and forcible heading.

Ezekiel i. 14 is a gloss of a later period. It is not contained* in the LXX, and, as Hitzig has pointed out, is a gloss on the preceding. The comparison with lightning contained in vs. 13 interested the reader, and the obscurity of that part of the verse above referred to as a gloss seems to have confused him. Verse 13 actually said, in its original form, that lightning proceeded from the fire; but the reader, puzzled by **מִתְהַלֶּכֶת**, yet grasping the general figure of the chapter, the appearance of Yahweh in the thunder storm as his Holy of Holies, made this somewhat erroneous gloss on the word **וַהֲיִיּוֹת**, **וַהֲיִיּוֹת יָצְאוּ וְשׁוּבוּ כְּמֵרָאֵה הַבָּרָק**, "And the creatures, a going and a returning, like the appearance of lightning," or more freely, "As to the creatures, they went back and forth like lightning." Not only, then, is the passage a gloss, but it is a gloss based upon a misunderstanding of a passage due to an earlier gloss.

Now there are two errors in the Masoretic text which both confirm the evidence of the LXX that this verse was a gloss, and also show that the gloss itself was not written until after the Maccabæan period. Manifestly **רָצִיָא** is an error for **יָצִיָא**, and **הַבּוֹק** for **הַבָּרָק**. This double blunder is evidence that the words were difficult to read, as small-hand marginal notes or interlinear interpolations always are, and corroborates the existing evidence of glossation. But, further, this confusion of **י** and **ר** and **ב** and **ו** could not have taken place so long as the archaic Hebrew alphabet was in use, for in that *i* and *r* and *r* and *z* bear no resemblance to one another. But in late Jewish script, especially when written small, the confusion could readily take place. We have, then, evidence that this gloss was made, not only later than the LXX translation, but also after the adoption of the later script.

Ezekiel i. 13. I have already noted Hitzig's emendation of **וְדַמּוֹת** in vs. 13 to **וּבִינּוֹת**, in accordance with the requirements of the sense and the testimony of the LXX. I call attention to it once more as illustrating, in connection with the succeeding verse, a point in the text criticism of the Old Testament to which sufficient attention does not seem to me to have been paid in practice. In correcting the textual blunders in **רָצוּא** and **בּוֹק** in vs. 14 we noticed that the errors crept in after the adoption of the square character. On the other hand **דַּמּוֹת** and **בִּינּוֹת** do not sufficiently resemble one another to permit any but the most blundering scribe to confuse the one with the other. But transcribed into the archaic script, the practical identity of the *d* and *b* might readily cause a scribe who had just been writing **דַּמּוֹת** to mistake for it the unusual **בִּינּוֹת**, especially if the latter were written defectively as **בִּינָת** or **בְּנוֹת**. Unlike the blunders in the succeeding verse, therefore, this error must be assigned to the period between the making of the LXX translation and the adoption of the square character.

Ezekiel vi. 14 offers us an example of an error committed before the date of the LXX translation, but which it would have been equally possible to have made with archaic or square characters, namely, that of **דַּבְּלָתָה** for **רַבְּלָתָה**. Ez. iii. 12 contains, if we accept Hitzig's emendation, and substitute **בְּרוּם** for **בְּרוּךְ**, as the sense requires, an example of a blunder committed while the archaic characters were still in use. In the square characters final **ם** and final **ך** are not likely to be confused, but in the archaic script there is a striking resemblance between them. The agreement of the LXX and Masoretic texts show that the error was of early date.

Ezekiel i. 18. And now permit me to call your attention to a verse containing both an early interpolation and also a textual blunder committed before the introduction of the square characters. Chapter i. 18 as it now stands is nonsense. It reads: "And their fellows, and height to them and awfulness to them, and their fellows full of eyes round about unto them four." The LXX and the versions in their very variations testify to the same text. In their efforts to make some sense out of the passage, the LXX read **וְאֵרָאָה** in place of **וִירָאָה**, and the Peshitto read **וִירָאָה**. The Vulgate translates "horribilis adspectus," which is evidently **וִירָאָה**. Cornill, finding the passage unintelligible, has emended it in a most arbitrary and unjustifiable manner quite beyond recognition. He reads, **וְנִבּוֹת לָהֶם**

וּבְרִיָּהם לָהֶם וְהָיָה מִלֵּאֲוֵי עֵינִים סָבִיב לְאַרְבַּעַתָּן. The Canterbury revisers, again, emended the passage by dropping the conjunction ן before נִבְה, thus effecting a possible grammatical construction, but still leaving an extremely awkward sentence. Now in examining this verse, the veriest tyro must observe that the word וּבְרִיָּהם is suspicious. The feminine plural occurs only once in the Bible (Lev. xiv. 19), the masculine six times in all, and twice in Ezekiel (i. 18, x. 12). It is extremely unlikely that the same writer in the same verse would use the same word in two different genders. The נִבְרִיָּהם seems well established; נִבְה is therefore suspicious. Moreover, וּבְרִיָּהם adds nothing to the sense of the passage, but repeats in an unnecessary manner what has already been said. Turning to a somewhat similar verse, x. 12, we find this juxtaposition וּבְרִיָּהם וִידֵרָם. Writing וּבְרִיָּהם in archaic script, we get a form which closely resembles וִידֵרָם, used in 1 Kings vii. 32 for the sides or spokes of a wheel. Assuming this emendation, we have much the same juxtaposition which we find in x. 12; but there it is used literally of the backs and sides of the creatures, here of the backs and sides—that is, the felloes and spokes—of wheels. The words which now separate וּבְרִיָּהם and וִידֵרָם are a mystical gloss on the word וּבְרִיָּהם.

Jeremiah xxxii. 11. An excellent example of a gloss of this description is afforded by Jer. xxxii. 11. In June, 1888, I presented to this Society a note on this passage, pointing out that we have in the account of Jeremiah's contract with his cousin Hanameel a description of the use of clay tablets with envelopes for contracts, just as among the Assyrians and Babylonians; that at a later date, when clay tablets had given way to parchment and papyrus, this description became unintelligible; and that at length, at a date later than the LXX translation, in which it does not appear, an explanation of the unintelligible word הַחֲתוּם ("the sealed") was added, as follows: הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֲקִים, "the law and the statutes." The verse originally read, "And I took the record of purchase, the closed [or sealed] and the open." After a method which became very prevalent later among the Jews the word חֲתוּם, being no longer intelligible, was interpreted as having a mystic signification. That signification was in this case suggested by Is. viii. 16. There we read, חֲתוּם תּוֹרָה, "seal instruction." Here חֲתוּם and תּוֹרָה are brought together. Observing this, a reader of Jeremiah notes the חֲתוּם as referring to the תּוֹרָה, which he, of course, takes in its late sense as "the law," and therefore expresses by הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֲקִים, "the commandment and the statutes."

Ezekiel i. 18. The gloss on Ez. i. 18 is slightly different in character, being an attempt to bring a mystic or religious sense out of a word of common signification by means of etymology. The method is well known and widely applied in the later Jewish system of interpretation. We know from the New Testament that the same method was in vogue at the beginning of our era. This passage possesses an interest as exhibiting that method already in use as early as 200 B.C. It depends upon the principle of literal interpretation, that each word, quite independently of the context, may have a meaning of its own, or may even contain several words, each of which contains a special message from God. So the word **וְנִבְרָה**, which seems, according to the joint testimony of this gloss and of x. 12, to have been written defectively **וְנִבְרָה**, consists of the conjunction **וְ**, the word **נִבְרָה**, and the pronominal suffix **הֶם**; but by a different division of the letters a form of the word **נִבְרָה** might be read. According to this division a new word is obtained, which is to be regarded as existing in the intention of the Spirit, and as giving a second, mystical sense to the passage. The word **וְנִבְרָה** being analyzed as **וְנִבְרָה לָהֶם**, we get the gloss, "and there is exaltation to them" which is further explained as equivalent to **וְיֵרָאָה לָהֶם**, "and there is an awful appearance to them." According to the gloss of this annotator, when the prophet wrote **וְנִבְרָה**, "and their fellows," he meant also by the mystical-literal method to imply **וְנִבְרָה לָהֶם וְיֵרָאָה לָהֶם**, "and there was exaltation to them = awfulness to them." Remove this gloss, and the verse becomes intelligible and consequent: "And their fellows and their spokes were full of eyes round about unto the four of them."

Isaiah viii. 23. An interesting etymological gloss of a different character occurs in this verse. The first words of that verse, **כִּי לֹא מוֹעֵף לְאִשֶּׁר מוֹעֵץ לָהּ**, not only break, they conflict with and contradict, the sense of the passage. The Canterbury revisers have translated viii. 21-23 as follows:

"And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward: and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away. But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations."

The objections to this rendering of the words in question are, 1, that I do not believe the words will bear such an interpretation ; 2, " But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish " makes nonsense in connection with the preceding. Cheyne has inverted the order of vs. 21 and 22 in the effort to establish a better connection, but, as it seems to me, without success. The whole passage is admittedly one of the greatest obscurity, owing chiefly, if not altogether, to the words quoted above from vs. 23. Turning to the LXX we find apparently the same text, out of which the translators seem to have been able to extract no sense at all. Now in vs. 22 we have side by side the words **מעוף** and **צוקה**, the first of which is a *ἄπαξ λεγόμενον*. According to the dictionary these words resemble one another in sense, and the two together mean "gloom of oppression." But the parallelism of the passage points to a different translation. We have two phrases, **צוקה מעוף** and **מנרה מפלה**. These are evidently synonymous phrases, juxtaposed in reverse order of words. **צוקה** and **מפלה** are evidently not only synonymous, but also in the same construction. Presumably, therefore, **מעוף** and **מנרה** are synonymous in sense and parallel in construction. **מנרה** means 'driven,' and **מעוף** is evidently connected with **עוף**, 'to fly.' Regarding it as a participle, we obtain the sense "caused to fly." The first part of vs. 23 is a rather blind gloss on the difficult words **צוקה מעוף**, and reads literally, "for it is not **מוצק** (made to fly) to that to which it is **מוצק** (oppressed)," or in other words **מוצק** and **מוצק** are not synonyms, although there are passages where the words have similar senses. Omit this gloss, and reform slightly the Masoretic verse division by attaching **ופנה למעלה** to vs. 22 instead of 21, — a change absolutely demanded by the parallelism of the verses, — and I believe that the chief difficulties of this passage will be found to have vanished. What remains of vs. 23 should be transferred to chapter ix., as is done in the LXX and in our English Bibles. Beginning with vs. 21, we should then translate : "And they shall pass through it hard bestead and hungry, and it shall come to pass, when they hunger, they shall be maddened, and curse their king and their god. And they shall look upward, and gaze earthward, but behold distress and gloom, a flying into anguish and being driven into darkness" ; or perhaps "a flying of anguish and driven darkness." Following this picture of apparently hopeless misery comes the promise of redemption, beginning, "In the former time he made light," etc., with which chapter ix. should commence.

Isaiah xxv. 4, 5 affords an example of erroneous verse division on the part of the Masoretes similar to that pointed out in viii. 21, 22. Verse 4 should end with the word **מִחֶרֶב**; vs. 5, after **וְרִימ** before **תִּכְנִיעַ**, and the latter word should be connected with the succeeding, not the preceding sentence, which should form a verse by itself. This verse would consist of two entirely parallel halves in contrasted order, the first half beginning, the second ending with a verb, **תִּכְנִיעַ** and **יִיַּעַנָה**¹ respectively. The passage should read: "For thou hast been a fortress to the poor in his distress, a refuge from storm, a shadow from heat. For the blast of the terrible is like a hail-storm, like heat in a dry place the desolation of strangers. Thou bringest down heat by the shadow of a cloud, the song of the terrible he humbleth (causeth to sing)." I have translated 'hail-storm' instead of 'wall.' The Masoretic text **וְרִימ קִיר**, "storm of a wall," makes no sense. Everywhere else we find **וְרִימ בָּרֵךְ**, "hail-storm," or **וְרִימ מַיִם**, "storm of waters." I think that in our passage **קִיר** is an error (in the old alphabet) for **בָּרֵךְ**. Unfortunately, the LXX on this passage is altogether blind.

Glosses of a similar character and origin have been recognized by older scholars in a number of chapters in Isaiah and Ezekiel; cf. Is. ii. 22; iii. 1; ix. 14; vii. 17, 20; viii. 7; Ez. vi. 6, 13, etc.

Isaiah vii. 14. This famous verse furnishes an example of a corruption of the text of another sort from those hitherto noticed. It is one of those passages, as I shall attempt to prove, in which the LXX represents the original reading, while the commentators cling to the corrupt Hebrew text. The latter reads, literally translated: "Therefore, the Lord, he giveth you a sign. The young woman is pregnant, and beareth a son, and calleth his name God with us." Parallel passages for the words following **הַעֲלָמָה** are Gen. xvi. 11, "Behold, thou art pregnant, and bearest a son, and callest his name Ishmael"; and Jud. xiii. 5, "Behold, thou art pregnant, and bearest a son"; and for the word **הָרָה** as an adjective meaning, not "she shall conceive," but "pregnant," cf. Gen. xxxviii. 24, 25; Ex. xxi. 22; 1 Sam. iv. 19; 2 Sam. xi. 5; Is. xxvi. 17; Jer. xxxi. 8. No other meaning can be given to the form than "pregnant," "with child"; and without some word to denote future time it must indicate a present condition.

¹ This verb contains a play on the two different stems **עָנָה** 'humble' and **עָנָה** 'sing.'

But it is the word **העלמה** which constitutes the real difficulty of the passage. Cheyne, G. A. Smith, and Dillmann all translate it literally as "the young woman." But what young woman? Having the article prefixed, it must be either some specific young woman, well known or previously referred to, or young women as a class, distinguished from other classes. But it is manifestly neither one of these. In fact, commentators have practically disregarded the article, or explained it away, treating "*the* young woman" as being some indefinite young woman. Professor Briggs (*Messianic Prophecy*, p. 195, note) points out the impossibility of this treatment of the article. He proposes to regard **ה** as the sign of the vocative, and translates: "Lo, young woman, thou art pregnant, and about to bear a son, and call his name Immanuel." But this treatment of **ה** alone, with no further indication of the vocative, is grammatically untenable (Dillmann). Furthermore, leaving the grammatical question aside, the meaning obtained by Briggs, Dillmann, Smith, and Cheyne alike seems to me very weak, to say the least, and the sign ill-chosen and clumsily presented. Smith comments upon the passage thus (*The Book of Isaiah*, I. 115): "A child, he says, shall shortly be born, to whom his mother shall give the name Im-manu-El — *God with us*. By the time this child comes to years of discretion, *he shall eat butter and honey*. Isaiah then explains the riddle. He does not, however, explain who the mother is, having described her vaguely as *a* or *the young woman of marriageable age*; for that is not necessary to the sign, which is to consist in the Child's own experience. To this latter he limits his explanation." He throws aside as irrelevant and unimportant a part of the verse on which the prophet lays much stress; converts *the* young woman into *a* young woman, and then drops her altogether as insignificant and unmeaning. That the mother is both necessary and important in this sign of the birth of Immanuel is evinced by the emphasis laid upon her in the verse, the space allotted to her, and the article attached to her name as one well known. The LXX reads *ἡ παρθένος*, which is the translation of **הבתולה**. A comparison of the LXX with the Hebrew consonant text shows us in every other word in the verse a complete agreement, evidence of a conscientious translation, and a correct transmission. This is well brought out by the treatment in the LXX of the word which the Masoretes point **קָרָאתָ**, apparently intending thereby the third person singular feminine. The LXX read the same consonants, but translated *καλέσεις*, pronouncing **קָרָאתָ**.

Now, when we ask the question, which change would have been

more readily made, from **העלמה** to **הבתולה**, or *vice versa*, I think it must be admitted that, supposing an original **העלמה**, it would be very difficult to find any reasons for a change to **הבתולה**; whereas, on the other hand, the statement that a virgin should become a mother might very well have offended some stupid literalist, even if there were nothing else involved, and led to the substitution of **עלמה** for **בתולה**. The presumption in favor of the LXX text, which is very strong, and would be regarded as sufficient evidence in a less important verse, is greatly strengthened by the testimony of the New Testament and the Peshitto. The latter agrees with the LXX in reading "the virgin." The New Testament gives independent evidence of the same reading in the received Hebrew text of the second half of the first century of our era. Neither Matt. i. 23 nor Luke i. 31 is a citation from the LXX; nor are they, probably, taken directly from the Hebrew. They seem — and more particularly is this true of the passage in St. Matthew's gospel — to be translations from a secondary source, probably a traditional Aramaic rendering of the Hebrew, an oral Targum, current among the Jews at that time. They transmit to us "the virgin," and not "the young woman," as the current translation of the passage at the period of the composition of both the gospel of St. Matthew and the gospel of St. Luke, and thus testify that **הבתולה** and not **העלמה** was read in the received texts of that day.

But, substituting **הבתולה** for **העלמה**, and translating, "Behold, the virgin is with child, and is about to bear a son, and shall call [or "thou shalt call"] his name Emmanuel," what is the reference in **הבתולה**? Who is this virgin? Mic. iv. 8-10 is an excellent commentary on our passage. There we see the daughter of Zion in the pangs, as it were, of childbirth: "Writhe and twist, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail." The afflictions which befall the land, including the capture of Jerusalem itself, are the travail pangs of the daughter of Zion, through which only can deliverance come. But not only is the daughter of Zion likened to one that is in travail; in the next chapter the figure is dropped, and she is spoken of as actually bringing forth a child. So the prophet says (v. 2), "Therefore he giveth them over until she that travaileth hath brought forth." Then follows the picture of the glorious reign of the Messiah, born of the daughter of Zion out of the travail of her affliction at the hand of the Assyrians. The whole passage is exactly parallel with our passage. Here also we have the virgin pregnant with a child who shall be "God with us." The following verses then

narrate the desolation of the land, but through this "God-with-us" child of the virgin the kingdom shall be restored more glorious than before. Chapter viii. takes up this same "God with us." When the Assyrians shall appear to have destroyed all, there shall still remain this "God with us," by which the redemption and restoration shall be brought about. This "God with us" is the child of the virgin in Is. vii. 14 ; and it is the same child, we see by comparing the passages, who shall be the child of the travailing daughter of Zion depicted in Mic. v. 2. The virgin of Is. vii. 14 is, then, none other than the virgin daughter of Zion, and the contemporary prophets Isaiah and Micah are found to be making use of the same figure, influenced by the same spirit.

Our next consideration is the use of the word "virgin" in reference to a city or people, and more particularly in reference to Jerusalem and Judah. Is. xxxvii. 22 and Lam. ii. 13 use the full phrase, "virgin, daughter of Zion" ; while Jer. xiv. 17 has "virgin, daughter of my people," and Lam. i. 15, "virgin, daughter of Judah." Micah uses both "daughter of Zion" and "daughter of Jerusalem." Amos v. 2 and Jer. xxxi. 4, 21 use "virgin of Israel," which is, perhaps, the closest to our own passage. We also find foreign nations personified in a similar manner, as "virgin daughter of Zidon," Is. xxiii. 12, "virgin daughter of Babylon," Is. xlvii. 17, and "virgin daughter of Egypt," Jer. xlv. 11.

The Targum on Isaiah agrees with the Hebrew text in writing העלמה in place of הבתולה in this verse, and Jerome found the same word in the Hebrew texts of his day. The evidence seems to show that originally, and as late as the second half of the first century after Christ, the Hebrew texts read הבתולה. Was the change to העלמה deliberate, meant to exclude the Christian interpretation of the passage, or was it a mere blunder, the adoption into the text of the emendation of a stupid literalist?

Psalm cxviii. 27. A difficulty occurs in a few ritual and dramatic passages through the incorporation, in the period of literalism, of rubrics or stage directions with the text. Even פלה has been treated as a divine revelation. The 27th verse of the ritual and almost dramatic Ps. cxviii. seems to be a case in point. The closing verses of this Psalm are an outburst of praise. Verse 26 gives the signal in the words, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Yahweh," to which follows the answer, "We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh." Then all burst out in praise :

“Yahweh is God, who gave us light.
 My God art Thou, I give Thee thanks;
 My God, I will exalt Thee.
 Give thanks to Yahweh, for He is good;
 For His love is everlasting.”

Between the first and second lines of this praise song is inserted in our present text the incongruous and rhythmically offensive phrase **אָסְרוּ חֵן בַּעֲבָתִים עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ**, which is ordinarily rendered, “Bind the victim with cords unto the horns of the altar.” Cheyne, finding the Hebrew text untranslatable in its present form, produces out of it and the LXX: “Bind the procession with branches, (step on) to the altar horns” (*The Book of Psalms*, p. 315). I have already pointed out that these words disturb the connection, interrupting in most irrelevant and parenthetical manner the outburst of praise. I have also stated that rhythmically the passage is incongruous; or rather it is a prosaically arranged direction in the midst of verses. The difficulties which commentators have found in harmonizing and translating this half-verse are due, in my judgment, to the fact that it is a ritual rubric, and not a part of the versification.

Psalm lxviii. 12-15 is a still more curious instance of a passage rendered utterly unintelligible by the confusion of rubrical directions with the text. The Psalm is a consecration hymn, written in the post-exilic period, and based on the history of Israel, seen from the standpoint of the Jerusalem temple,—that method of viewing the history of the world which culminated in the Chronicles. The first stanza is the deliverance from Egypt. Following this is a song of triumph for that deliverance, based primarily on Ex. xv. Then follows a stanza on the march through the wilderness; then the conquest of Canaan. The fifth stanza celebrates God's choice of Zion. Then follows a stanza on God's government from Zion, as God and king of Israel. The seventh stanza describes the pomp and majesty of His worship, and contains a hymn which is put in the mouth of the temple singers. The eighth stanza is a prayer to God to overthrow the nations and make Jerusalem triumph. Then follows a brief stanza, addressed to the nations, calling upon them to render praise to the God of Israel. To this the nations respond by an ascription of praise as required, and Israel rejoins in a similar ascription. It is the fourth stanza, the conquest of Canaan, in which the difficulties are accumulated. Omitting the italics, and substituting in part the marginal readings, the Canterbury revisers translate as follows (vs. 11-14): —

“The Lord giveth the word :
 The women that publish the tidings are a great host.
 Kings of armies flee, they flee :
 And she that tarrieth at home divideth the spoil.
 Will ye lie among the sheepfolds,
 The wings of a dove covered with silver,
 And her pinions with yellow gold?
 When the Almighty scattered kings therein,
 It snoweth in Zalmon.”

Substantially the commentators agree with this translation. Indeed, there is little room for disagreement in the translation of the individual clauses. The difficulty lies in the lack of coherence and the entire absence of any connecting thought. As presented in the above translation it sounds perilously like nonsense, as every one must have observed who has ever read it carefully. In my translation of the Psalm (*Scriptures Hebrew and Christian*, II. 108) I attempted to solve the difficulty by treating each of these unconnected sentences as the title or headline of a song. In the seventh stanza the order of the festival procession is described, and the psalmist not only mentions the minstrels and singers, but puts in their mouth a song to be sung (vs. 26, 27). Similarly in the fourth stanza, which describes the conquest of Canaan, mention is made of the women heralding the good tidings of victory, whereupon the good tidings are dramatically told in a series of hymns, apparently well known at the time, and therefore referred to merely by title or headline, a practice of which we find examples in the headings of several Psalms (Ps. xlv. 1, lxxx. 1, etc.). Only these titles have come down to us ; but, judging by the titles, the songs seem to have been on the whole appropriate as pæans of victory over the Canaanites. According to my division they are five in number, viz. : —

1. מלכי צבאות ידרון ידרון
 ונות בית תחלק שלל

“Kings of hosts flee, they flee ;
 While housewives divide the spoil.”

2. אם תשכבון בין שפתים

“Though ye dwell among dung heaps ” [according to others, “sheepfolds ”].

3. כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף
 ואברותיה בירקרק חרוץ

“Dove’s wings covered with silver,
 Her pinions with glittering gold.”

בפרש שרי מלכים בה

“When Shaddai scattered kings therein.”

5.

תשלן בצלמון

“It snoweth in Zalmon.”

Ewald so far anticipated the explanation here offered as that he proposed to regard vs. 14 and 15 as a fragment of an old song put in the mouth of the women. Cheyne, in his commentary on the Psalms (p. 187), seems inclined to adopt the view which I have presented above, at least in principle, but does not express himself with definiteness. My interpretation was arrived at independently. My translation was printed in 1888, before I left America on the Babylonian Expedition, although the volume was not printed until 1889. Cheyne's volume bears date 1888, but, owing to absence from the country, I did not see it, nor learn his views until the present year. I mention this because the independent testimony of two witnesses is so much more important than their dependent testimony.

Canticles ii. 15. My explanation of the foregoing passage in Ps. lxxviii., as containing the headlines of well-known songs, may be supported by a reference to Cant. ii. 15 : —

“Take us the jackals,
The little jackals that spoil the vineyards,
For our vineyards are in blossom.”

This has been explained, I think correctly, as being the first verse of a song to be sung by the Shulammite. The song was well known, and hence only the first verse was quoted, to serve as a sort of stage direction, to indicate the whole song to be sung.

Cant. iv. 8, viii. 5^b, are similarly fragments of songs to be sung, probably by a chorus. They have suffered in the hands of almost all commentators from being interpreted as portions of the regular dialogue, and occasioned much difficulty from the peculiar and extraneous allusions which they contain. They seem to be songs appropriated from other sources, and utilized in the same manner as the Prayer of Hannah, in the story of Samuel, and the Prayer of Jonah, in the story of Jonah ; excepting that here we appear to have fragments only, and there entire songs.

Is. iii. 18-24, v. 1-2, afford instances of the utilization of popular songs, or fragments of songs, which may help to throw light on the passages just cited.